

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An exhaust gas control apparatus for an internal combustion engine, comprising:

a NOx storage/reduction catalyst ~~(7)~~provided in an exhaust passage and which stores NOx in exhaust gas by at least one of adsorption and absorption when an air-fuel ratio of in-flowing exhaust gas is lean, and then reduces and purifies the stored NOx using reduction components in the exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio of the in-flowing exhaust gas is rich, wherein:

an upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~of a carrier of the NOx storage/reduction catalyst ~~(7)~~catalyst, is positioned on an upstream side of an exhaust gas flow, and a downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ of the NOx storage/reduction catalyst ~~(7)~~catalyst, is positioned on the downstream side of the exhaust gas flow;

the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ carries an oxygen storage component that absorbs oxygen in the exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is lean and releases the absorbed oxygen when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is rich;

the amount of the oxygen storage component on the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ is made less than the amount of the oxygen storage component on the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~; carrier; and

a NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~carrier.

2. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ and the

downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ of the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ carry at least one of platinum, palladium and rhodium, and the NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ by changing an amount of at least one of platinum, palladium and rhodium carried on the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ and the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~. carrier.

3. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ by changing at least one of a carrier cell shape, a carrier cell size, and a carrier cell number on the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ and the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~. carrier.

4. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ and the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ are provided separately.

5. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion ~~(7a)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ and the downstream side portion ~~(7b)~~ ~~of~~ the carrier ~~(7a, 7b)~~ are provided integrally.